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Title: **Kaleidoscopic spectrum of India through eunuch's eyes: A study of LGBT narratives by Indian authors**

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Introduction:

In 2014, hijras were acknowledged by the Indian Supreme Court as a "third gender," confirming their freedom to identify as something other than male or female. An important first step in recognizing the identity and rights of eunuchs in India was this legislative acknowledgment. Even with official acknowledgment, eunuchs frequently experience prejudice and deep-rooted social stigma. Their marginalization is a result of prejudice and ignorance, which influences their access to healthcare, work opportunities, and education, among other areas of their existence. Social exclusion is a common occurrence for eunuchs, resulting in their seclusion from mainstream society. In the hijra culture, family rejection and disownment are frequent occurrences, leading some eunuchs to establish alternative familial systems. We all must have seen and listened many times a person moving around the city, at and near railway station, at traffic signals, in an occasion of marriage ceremony, child birth and many more whose gesture is quite different from masculine and feminine although he or she having the same physical property what a man and woman possesses but the difference is that having a woman gesture she is not a woman and physically what he possesses does not behave so. They are found in groups and are come to know to us as a very jolly companion enjoying their life clapping, laughing, teasing, and asking for money, sometimes we see them showing their genital part to the passengers and enforcing them to get money. But rarely anybody tries to know the poignant behind their laughter, their misbehavior in a railway compartment and many places to make themselves alive. If we cast a look into the history of these people, we find a very unjust brutal history and the fact behind. They are called literary eunuch or hijra somewhere and many more terminologies are used for them. The origins of eunuchs are not known. But it is believed that they developed from the use of castration as a form of punishment, or was a deliberate transfer of practice from the field of animal husbandry. The phenomenon is

especially associated with Asia. Assyria and China are the earliest known civilizations to feature eunuchs, using them from the second millennium BCE. Primarily, the practices of castration were made in the setting of royal and imperial courts that eunuchs had been found in history.

In India, eunuchs—also referred to as hijras—represent a distinct and intricate group with a long history that is intricately woven into the nation's social, religious, and cultural fabric. They have lived there for generations. The term "hijra" refers to a broad category of people who may be transgender, intersex, or have undergone castration. This research examines the complex identities of hijras in India by examining their cultural relevance, historical roles, acceptance issues, and position in modern Indian culture. They have a complicated and varied history, with varying good and bad facets according to the historical, social, and cultural setting. Eunuchs have frequently experienced marginalization, prejudice, and stigma from society. As many civilizations, their nonconforming gender identity or castration has resulted as discrimination, mockery, and isolation. Historically, they have had difficulty finding work and obtaining an education. Their chances of advancing economically and socially have been hampered by discrimination in the job and in educational institutions. In the past, certain eunuchs have been susceptible to abuse and exploitation. Due to the power dynamics in some civilizations and historical eras, eunuchs are vulnerable to abuse, such as forced castration and slavery. In certain historical settings, people were castrated against their will; this was frequently the consequence of societal or governmental pressures. A drawback of the eunuchs' past is their lack of physical autonomy. People from many cultures have misunderstood and misrepresented eunuchs. Stereotypes and derogatory depictions in books and the media have helped to keep prejudiced ideas about their identities alive.

In the past, eunuchs have been important members of courts, acting as counsellors, administrators, and guardians. Their distinct position, sometimes as a "third gender," has helped shape different viewpoints and abilities in different communities. Eunuchs have been connected to spiritual or religious duties in several societies. They have been associated with auspicious rites and rituals, and it has been thought that they had particular abilities. Eunuchs have contributed to art and culture in a variety of ways, such as via dancing, singing, and amusement. Their performances have been essential to many events and cultural customs. The rights and dignity of eunuchs have come to be more recognized in many modern nations. Some nations have enacted legal recognition and anti-discrimination measures to defend the rights of people who identify as non-binary. Eunuch groups have established support networks, which provide a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Activists and advocacy organizations aim to challenge societal stereotypes, raise awareness, and provide equal rights for eunuchs. It is critical to examine the history of eunuchs with delicacy, acknowledging the range of experiences as well as the changing nature of society over time. While negative characteristics of eunuchs endure, there are also examples of perseverance, cultural importance, and good contributions throughout their history.

Mythological aspects of eunuch:

Hijras have a significant presence in Indian civilization and are widely recognized as a distinct social and cultural group. In Indian communities, individuals have traditionally fulfilled certain roles that involve performing ritualized acts of begging and bestowing blessings during marriage and birthing rites. Hijras are recognized as a marginalized minority with a unique cultural identity, yet they face prejudice and social stigma. The eunuch character often carries symbolic significance in various legendary situations, representing ideas associated with authority, gender, sexuality, and spiritual integrity. Eunuchs, also referred as Hijras or Kinnaras in India, have complex and often contradictory portrayal in

Indian Mythology. While some stories depict them as divine beings with magical powers, others relegate them to the margins of society. In some versions of the myth, Kamadeva is accompanied by celestial beings called kinnaras, who are depicted as beautiful, talented, and possessing ambiguous gender identities. In Mahabharata, Shikhandi, born as a girl raised as a boy, plays a pivotal role in the Pandavas' victory over the Kauravas. The story of Shikhandi is a complex one. While her victory over Bhishma is celebrated, it reinforces the idea that her power stemmed solely from her ambiguous gender. This reinforces the notion that eunuch identity is significant only in relation to the established gender binary. In Egyptian mythology, Atum was sometimes depicted as having performed self-castration, symbolizing the process of creation and the separation of the divine's male and female aspects. Many Greek and Roman narratives prominently include eunuchs, who are often associated with concepts of gender ambiguity and transformation. For example, the Gallae were castrated priests of the goddess Cybele, known for their extreme dedication to the goddess through self-castration and ecstatic rituals. Moreover, the story of Hermaphroditus, a character with both male and female characteristics, emphasizes the themes of androgyny and the merging of gender binaries. Within the Chinese imperial courts, eunuchs held significant roles as harem guardians, counsellors, and bureaucrats. Shangdi is a Chinese legendary deity often called upon to safeguard against castration accidents and ensure the success of castration therapies. The eunuch figure in Chinese mythology symbolizes the complex dynamics of power and the transformation of gender roles within the imperial society. The biblical texts often make mention of eunuchs, who commonly occupy administrative roles within royal courts. In the book of Isaiah, eunuchs are portrayed as individuals who receive divine favour due to their unwavering faithfulness and commitment. Hegai, a eunuch, plays a crucial role in the selection and preparation of Queen Esther in the biblical story of Esther. Within broader mythological and symbolic contexts, eunuchs might represent concepts of spiritual integrity, self-denial, and

selflessness. Castration is a form of self-abnegation and dedication that can lead to a heightened spiritual or mystical state. Eunuchs can also symbolize the triumph over worldly desires and the pursuit of higher ideals or universal truths. The mythological eunuch character embodies an intricate interplay among social, theological, and cultural viewpoints toward gender, power, and sexuality. Their presence in mythological narratives offers valuable insights into the diverse perspectives and interpretations that different societies have held regarding the roles and significance of eunuchs throughout history.

For the research it has been brought into consideration several Indian authors who raised their voices for LGBT and most importantly Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy, A Revathi & V Geetha. The works of these authors have been brought into consideration respectively are: “Delhi: A Novel” “The Ministry of Utmost Happiness”, and “The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story”.

Although these writers are from different strata of life and different mindset as well but the psychological aspects of the marginalized community have been portrayed equally. In fact, they are sensible for what they are pouring to the readers presenting every minute details of life that generally we encounter in performing at different places such as railway station, bus stop, traffic signal, marriage ceremony, child birth ceremony. In fact, they are part of our life to bless prosperity and happiness but the melodramatic society shows its insensitivity by mocking and making outcaste of his society.

Khushwant Singh is a well-known, well-liked, and much criticized writer. He is well-known for his forthrightness and brutal honesty, as well as the reflection of his clarity in his work. This is the reality behind his enormous adulation and disdain. When we think about Khushwant Singh's life, we think of a kaleidoscope. His life took an unforeseen turn, transporting him to unexpected locations. He

later worked as a lawyer, diplomat, historian, novelist, short story writer, journalist, editor, and well-known columnist.

Khushwant Singh took almost twenty years to complete the novel “Delhi”. It was published in 1990. The book does not carry the plain historical catalogue of Delhi, but involves his wit, sarcasm, humor and also erotic description to the book. We know Delhi as the capital of India which was completely destructed and reconstructed many times as it called to be a city of culture, calamity, conceit, capability, poets, saints and politicians. The central force of the story which upholds all the historical and contemporary records alive. His protagonist is a rude, old, roguish Sikh journalist, in love-hate relationship with a hermaphrodite, Bhagmati and the city.

In Khushwant Singh's work, Delhi's past is corporeal: significant emphasis is placed on sexuality, sensuality, physicality, and physiology. The majority of autobiographical accounts convey frightening imagery of crimes performed by invaders to the bodies of its residents; the tell of the torture of women, men, and children. Much has been written on how bodies are used, exploited, eaten, or manipulated in the making of history. At times, it appears that the fascination with what love, passion, sex, hatred, vendetta, and violence do to the body, as well as the role all of these play in creating the history of the city, borders on obsession. As we focus on the figure of the prostitute hijra Bhagmati, whose name appears in 10 chapters of Delhi. Bhagmati is a feminine hijra, which indicates that the female is proportionally larger than the male in her composition. The hijra group consists primarily of phenotypic men with a range of sexual dysfunctions and homoerotic inclinations who eventually remove their genitalia, with a minority of intersexed persons or those born with ambiguous genitalia, regardless of chromosomal and hormonal composition. The hijra community rejects binary distinctions in a variety of contexts: in sexuality, where they identify as asexual and reject stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity; in intimate

relationships, where they explore a wider range of relationships than heterosexuals; in religion, where they follow syncretic religious practices that blend Hindu and Muslim traditions; in their tendency to live nomadic lives; and in their tendency to be marginalized in society. Being infertile themselves, they are revered for their ability to influence conception and procreation, and their blessings are considered auspicious, particularly for newlyweds and those celebrating the birth of a male kid.

The reader is led to associate the history of the city with that of humanity by the motif of the hijra, whose nature denies dualistic distinctions in matters of sexuality, culturally and historically determined identity, interpersonal relations, religious denominations, in a word - all factors which can be seen as the most powerful determinants of human fate. The hijra identity subverts the oversimplified, binary, and conventional perspectives on morality, socially acceptable types of relationships, sexuality, and religious affiliation. Throughout the history of Delhi, it is adopted different forms, subjugating itself to the succession of different conquerors, recognising their needs, appropriating their natures and features to the point of mimicry, in order to triumphantly survive and outlive them. Bhagmati as a eunuch is undertaken with the precision of amateur and self -proclaimed “surgeons.” She is raped, hurt, injured, tortured, deformed, but survived. She is cynical, unprincipled, corruptible, yet triumphant in ability to survive. She lets others love her, provoking a grand scale of emotions: from love, passion, tenderness, to lust, anger, hatred, or disgust.

The next novel brought into notion for evaluation is Arundhati Roy’s “The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.” Arundhati Roy's novel "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" features the character Anjum, a transgender woman whose story is central to the narrative. The novel delves into Anjum's journey of self-discovery and the complexities of navigating identity in a society that often struggles with issues of gender and acceptance. She is portrayed with a focus on her personal

struggles, including societal discrimination, family dynamics, and the challenges associated with being a transgender individual in India. She becomes a part of the hijra community, forming connections with other transgender individuals. The novel explores the sense of community and belonging that Anjum finds among people who share similar experiences and challenges. Arundhati Roy addresses the intersectionality of Anjum's identity, considering factors such as religion, politics, and regional conflicts. The Character's experiences are intertwined with broader issues affecting Indian society, adding layers of complexity to her character. Anjum's character, the novel engages with broader political and social issues, including the impact of historical events, communal tensions, and political upheavals on marginalized communities. Anjum's story becomes a lens through which the novel explores the larger socio-political landscape of India.

Now we come across another author who strengthens the point of all the authors who have sympathy and sensitivity for the marginalized community, she is no other than A Revathi, a third gender author, wrote her autobiography and her gone through experiences in the book named "The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story." The works has been praised for its raw honesty, providing readers with a poignant and illuminating glimpse into the life of a transgender individual in India. Revathi's story serves as a powerful narrative that contributes to raising awareness about the struggles faced by hijras and the importance of empathy, acceptance, and equal rights.

The autobiography contributes to the broader discourse on transgender rights, challenging societal norms and advocating for a more inclusive and understanding society. It stands as a testament to the resilience and strength of individuals navigating the complexities of gender identity in the face of adversity.

Revathi starts out her story by talking about how she was raised in a typical South Indian household. The book delves into her awareness that she was a hijra and the difficulties she encountered in accepting who she was. She clarifies the

widespread prejudice and social stigma that hijras experience in Indian culture. She describes incidents of discrimination, mockery, and exclusion, which reflects larger cultural perceptions of gender nonconformity. She talks on how hijras are more likely to experience abuse and exploitation in their groups as well as in dealings with the larger community. This covers incidents of physical abuse, discrimination in a variety of settings, and the difficulties in finding steady work. She addresses social perspectives and conventional responsibilities within Indian cultural contexts as she examines the cultural and religious aspects of hijra identity. She considers how gender identity and religion interact. Revathi's memoirs encapsulate her individual search for love, acceptance, and a feeling of community. Regardless of gender identification, her story underscores the basic human yearning for comprehension and connection.

Literature Review:

As an interdisciplinary discipline, transgender studies have evolved to critically analyse the identities, experiences, and socio-political situations of transgender people. This study of the literature shows how research in the dynamic subject of transgender studies is always changing by giving a broad overview of the major themes, advancements, and arguments within the field. For the studies, it has been taken works of Indian authors who have penned down the issues of transgenders such as marginality, alienation, identity crisis and many other issues. The authors who have been brought into lime light for the research proposal are Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy and A Revathi and V Geetha. Apart from the authors, there will be studies on theorist whose theory will be instrumental to align the research in its respective area. They are Judith Butler, Susan Stryker, and Sandy Stone.

Theoretical Underpinnings and Historical Context:

The research of feminists and queers who questioned binary gender norms is where transgender studies first emerged. As demonstrated in "Gender Trouble," Judith Butler's seminal research on performativity established the theoretical framework for comprehending gender as a social construct. The theoretical underpinnings of transgender studies were shaped by later thinkers like Susan Stryker ("My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix") and Sandy Stone ("The Empire Strikes Back: A Post transsexual Manifesto").

Individuality and Self-Depiction:

Identity development and self-representation are major areas of interest in transgender studies. Scholarly analyses of transgender narratives, such as Susan Stryker's "Transgender History," and autobiographical works like Janet Mock's "Redefining Realness" provide insights into the nuanced ways people create and express their gender identities.

Cross-sectionality:

With the recognition of the connections between gender identity and other social categories including race, class, and sexual orientation, intersectionality has emerged as a major issue in transgender studies. Scholars such as Sandy Stone and Susan Stryker have adapted Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality paradigm to transgender studies, which emphasizes the significance of comprehending the variety of disadvantaged identities.

Hijra Community:

All three authors present a vivid portrayal of the hijra community in their works. The hijras, or eunuchs, are depicted as a distinct social group with its own set of customs, rituals, and challenges. The narrative provides insights into the communal bonds among hijras and their marginalized status within broader Indian society.

Social and Political Commentary:

The works engages with broader social and political issues in India, including religious tensions, political conflicts, and the impact of historical events on marginalized communities. The representation of transgender individuals, including hijras, is woven into the fabric of socio-political commentary.

Gender and Sexuality Studies:

Scholars in gender and sexuality studies may explore how the authors' portrayal of transgender characters challenges normative understandings of gender and sexuality. The novel can be analysed in the context of contemporary discussions on gender identity, queerness, and the intersectionality of identities.

Postcolonial Perspectives:

The novel lends itself to postcolonial readings, considering the historical and cultural dimensions of transgender identity in India. Scholars may examine how the authors' narrative contributes to the broader discourse on postcolonial literature and the representation of marginalized communities.

Research Question:

Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy and A Revathi & V Geetha as stated above, aimed to give a dimensional outline of the social mindset of the those who never leg behind taking as an opportunist the blessings and boons from them but being silent on the atrocity and drastic life of Eunuchs. The present research will address the following questions:

i. What is uniqueness in the presentation of “Delhi: A Novel”, “The Ministry of Utmost Happiness” and “The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story” by the LGBT authors?

ii. What is historical perspectives of transgender community?

iii. What are issues and problems of the transgender population?

iv. What is physical and mental status of transgender population?

v. What is the way to eradicate the unresolving issues of the marginalized community and to offer an ideal and dignified life style to them?

Aims and Objectives:

Following are the aims and objectives of the present study:

i. To examine and make the pragmatic analysis of theme of the novel of author who brought about the marginalized community in the light of society consciousness.

ii. To discover the psychological state of transgender and possibility to bring these community into the main stream society.

iii. To diagnose the objective of Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy and A Revathi & V Geetha through their works; "Delhi: A Novel", "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" and "The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story" to open up what society thinks about them.

iv. To explain with adequate illustrations, the basic pragmatic concepts related to the theory which analyses the pragmatic state of eunuch in our society.

v. To study critically the mode of the presentation of characters by taking into account the various socio-cultural factors that constitute the components of the pragmatic analysis: through the sociocultural factors.

vi. To highlight the factors such as age, social class, caste and religion, gender influencing the way of making assumption about an individual.

vii. To critically analyse the roles of the characters against their socio-cultural background in terms of pragmatic analysis.

viii. To Examine Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy and A Revathi & V Geetha as the great versatile writers of humanity, realistic, Sociologist and their artistry in the shaping the mind of the reader regarding transgender through their Works.

Research Methodology:

The goal of this study is to examine the writings of Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy, A Revathi, and V Geetha as literary works that integrate geography, existence, life, and literature. Examined are the transgender community's selected (re)constructions in the works. Here, the reconstruction of time and place within the works from eunuch's perspective is given special consideration. The research approach that is suggested to be used in this study is predicated on an examination of the writings of Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy, and A Revathi & V Geetha. This research will examine how the narrators express historical and modern concepts in both directions, while also examining what Bhagmati, Anjum, and A Revathi—the novel's main character—observe about society. The subject matter or topics of the works would look at the outward structure, particular methods, and stylistic quirks of the writers in their simplicity. A book typically consists of five main elements: storyline, characters, place, conflict, and narrative style. We will be looking through Khushwant Singh's novel to find the information that relates to the goal of this study.

Research Coverage or Sampling:

This research aims to cover the life of LGBT individuals in the diverse regions of India to grasp the spectrum of experiences across different cultural, social, and geographical contexts. This research focuses to cast a diverse ensemble of voices, each with their rich cultural heritage and complex social identities. Incorporation of both urban and rural representation will be the priority which acknowledges the distinct dynamics of lives of eunuchs in urban metropolitan hubs as well as often-overlooked realities of these people residing in rural areas.

Contribution to the field:

Eunuchs or hijras have been a part of Indian society for centuries, yet their narratives remain largely absent from mainstream literature. This study promises to bridge this gap by offering a platform for their voices and experiences. By centring eunuchs' narratives, this research disrupts the heteronormative bias in Indian literature and broadens the understanding of love, sexuality and gender identity. The exploration of intersectionality, considering factors like caste, class, and religion, can provide a nuanced portrayal of the challenges faced by eunuchs. It promises to enrich the field of literature by offering a fresh perspective and amplifying marginalised voices. It can contribute significantly to social change by fostering understanding, advocating for inclusion, and prompting a re-evaluation of gender and sexuality in India.

Structure of the Research Work:

Tentative Chapters

Chapter 1: Mapping the Identity: Historical perspective of Transgender persons

Chapter 2: Understanding Transgender persons

Chapter 3: Establishing Identity-'Coming out ' and 'transitioning'

Chapter 4: Living on the Extreme Margin: Social Exclusion & Discrimination of the Transgender persons

Chapter 5: Exploring self-consciousness: A study of *A. Revathi* and *V. Geetha*'s "The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story"

Chapter 6: Transgender Consciousness and Augmentation: A study of *Khushwant Singh's* "Delhi: A Novel" and *Arundhati Roy*'s "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness"

Chapter 7: Conclusion.

Conclusion:

The above-mentioned works of the authors provide a nuanced exploration of transgender identities, including the hijra community. The representation of these characters within the novel contributes to discussions on diversity, social justice, and the evolving landscape of literature that engages with issues of gender and sexuality in contemporary India. Furthermore, this study contributes to the ongoing conversation about the evolving landscape of LGBT narratives in India. By centring the voices of eunuchs, it broadens the spectrum of LGBT experiences and challenges the dominant narratives. This study aims to pave the way for a more inclusive and representative portrayal of Indian society. Scholars and critics interested in these themes may find these works a compelling subject for analysis within the broader context of transgender studies.

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